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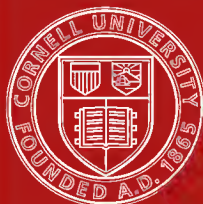
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The lyric bough.



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Alvina Scollard.

THE LYRIC BOUGH

THE LYRIC BOUGH

BY

CLINTON SCOLLARD



BOSTON

SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY

1908
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*If the things of earth must pass
Like the dew upon the grass,
Like the mists that break and run
At the forward sweep of the sun,
I shall be satisfied
If only the dreams abide.*

*Nay, I would not be shorn
Of gold from the mines of morn!
I would not be bereft
Of the last blue flower in the cleft,—
Of the haze that haunts the hills,
Or the moon that the midnight fills!
Still would I know the grace
Upon love's uplifted face,
And the slow, sweet joy-dawn there
Under the dusk of her hair.*

*I pray thee, spare me, Fate,
The woeful, wearying weight
Of a heart that feels no pain
At the sob of the autumn rain,
And takes no breath of glee
From the organ-surge of the sea,—
Of a mind where memory broods
Over songless solitudes!
I shall be satisfied
If only the dreams abide.*

SOUL TO BODY

AND thus my Soul unto my Body said,
With strenuous hardihead:
“ Hear thou this word!
The guests that thou wert wonted to invite
For eye, or ear, or for sweet lip-delight,
Shall not within this house be harbored!
I have been midnight-mute, and not demurred,
Alas, too long!
Henceforward shall I sternly ward the door,
To any knocking there, attaint with wrong,
Ready to cry, ‘ No more!’
Albeit fond familiars, fair of face,
Come smilingly, they shall not step within,—
Beauty, nor Blithesomeness, nor vernal Grace,—
If these are but the glozing cloak of Sin!
Clean-swept are all the rooms, and garnished
greenly,
And set about with Purity’s white flower;
There sitteth Peace serenely
From the clear stroke of this renewèd hour;
Hereafter shall be incense lifted only
To that pure Love that knoweth no alloy;
And thou, O Body, thou shalt not be lonely
With thy new comrade—Joy!”

THE GRAY INN

AND at the last he came to a gray inn,
About which all was gray,
E'en to the sky that overhung the day;
And though in time long lapsed it might have been
Bedecked with tavern gauds, naught now it bore
Above the shambling door
Saving a creaky sign,
Whereon the storm had blurred each limnèd line.
The portal hung a-cringe,
Belike to fall from off its one bruised hinge;
And on the deep-set casement's leaded panes
The spiders wove their geometric skeins.
Hot weariness was on him,—he must rest;
And though he deemed to find no other guest,
No comradeship, within
The ghostly grayness of that sombre inn,
Lo, as he crossed the lintel he beheld,
In the packed gloom
Of the low-raftered room,
One from whose eyes the mysteries of eld
Shone in lack-lustre wise!

And oh, the unfathomable strangeness of those eyes!
From boot to drooping plume
Gray-garmented was he, and his still face
Was like the wan sea when the banked clouds chase
Above it through the winter's iron skies.
One lean hand held a box of shaken dice,
And in a trice
This grim and gray one cried, "Come, throw with
me!
Long have I waited thee."
And he late-entered answered, "Naught have I
To wager!" And the gray one made reply,
"Thou hast thy soul, and shouldst thou cast and
win,
Lo, all the hoarded treasure of this inn!"
They gripped and cast, but, ere he saw which won,
The sleeper stirred and woke,—the dream was done!
Within his breast there throbbed a stabbing sting:
That day, for wealth, and what its trappings bring,
He knew his hand would do an evil thing.

THE BROTHERS

IN a dim-litten room
I saw a weaver plying at his loom,
That ran as swiftly as an agile rhyme;
And lo, the workman at the loom was Time,
Weaving the web of Life!
'Twas parti-colored, wrought of Peace and Strife;
And through the warp thereof
Shot little golden threads of Joy and Love.
And one stood by whose eyes were brimmed with
tears,
Poising the mighty shears
Wherewith, when seemed the weaver's will at ebb,
He cut the wondrous web.

Time weaves and weaves; and his dark brother, he
Will one day cut the web for you and me.

THE SLEEPER

ABOVE the cloistral valley,
Above the druid rill,
There lies a heavy sleeper
Upon a lonely hill.

All the long days of summer
The low winds whisper by,
And the soft voices of the leaves
Make murmurous reply.

All the long eves of autumn
The loving shadows mass
Round this sequestered slumbering-place
Beneath the cool hill grass.

All the long nights of winter
The white drifts heap and heap
To form a fleecy coverlet
Above the dreamer's sleep.

All the long morns of springtime
The tear-drops of the dew
Gleam in the violets' tender eyes
As if the blossoms knew.

Ah, who would break the rapture
Brooding and sweet and still,
The great peace of the sleeper
Upon the lonely hill!

THE DREAMER

THROUGHOUT his span of argent days
From birth to death,—a narrow zone,—
He wanders by untrodden ways,
Alone, yet not alone.

For ariel fancy moulds him mirth,
A slave to work his lightest whim;
And every vagrant wind of earth
Is company for him.

He sees a brother in the star
Set on the evening's violet verge,
And like his own the pulse-beats are
In the deep ocean surge.

He finds a fellow in the tree
Reliant in its thews of power,
And, rival of the lover bee,
He woos the lady flower.

THE DREAMER

He from the poet brook beguiles
The secret of its clearest rhyme,
And year on shortening year he smiles
In the hard face of Time.

So when he slips from earth at last,
This alien in the clay, it seems
As though from bondage he had passed
To other dearer dreams.

A VERNAL SONG

WHO's with me? Who's with me?
Come, ye lads and lasses!
For the bird is in the tree,
And the south-wind passes,
Making wooing melody
In the leaning grasses!

Every migrant of the earth
Knows the sap runs mellow;
Every thing of roving birth
Feels the spring his fellow;
Up and down, with flooding mirth,
Capers Punchinello.

Wheresoe'er we look abroad,
Lo, the sky caresses!
Cowslips perk and wind-flowers nod
In their dainty dresses;
Gleam upon the woodland sod
Violets and cresses.

A VERNAL SONG

Every laneway hath its lure,
Every path its pledges;
There is happiness, be sure,
Hidden in the hedges,
And where rills go purling pure
Down the mossy ledges.

So, since joy is in the land,
Come, ye lads and lasses!
Let us rove, a loving band,
Where the south-wind passes,
Hand in hand, hand in hand,
Through the leaning grasses!

THE HIDDEN BEAUTY

BEHIND the opalescence of the dawn,
Noon's opulent sapphire, and that glory known
As sunset, that nor pen nor brush can paint,
There lurks a hidden beauty that the soul
In its exalted moods attains unto,—
An essence finer than the grosser sense
Can grasp, too slight, too tenuous for words.
Such beauty dawned upon young Raphael's eyes,
And on the seer-like sight of Angelo;
It came to Shakespeare amid London murk,
And hung before the raptured gaze of Keats
Until they laid him under Roman mould.

Year-long we walk the world, our vision set
Upon its dull and dead realities.
"Away with dreams!" the strenuous moilers cry:
"Fling all such foolish flimsies to the winds!"
O sightless ones! better an hour with dreams,
Upon some hill-top hallowed by the morn,
Than heapèd days unlit by Beauty's face!

THE WIND

O THE wind is a faun in the spring-time
When the ways are green for the tread of the
 May;
 List! hark his lay!
 Whist! mark his play!
 T-r-r-r-l!
Hear how gay!

O the wind is a dove in the summer
When the ways are bright with the wash of the
 moon;
 List! hark him tune!
 Whist! mark him swoon!
 C-o-o-o-o!
Hear him croon!

O the wind is a gnome in the autumn
When the ways are brown with the leaf and burr;
 Hist! mark him stir!
 List! hark him whir!
 S-s-s-s-t!
Hear him chirr!

O the wind is a wolf in the winter
When the ways are white for the hornèd owl;
Hist! mark him prow!
List! hark him howl!
G-r-r-r-l!
Hear him growl!

THE JESSAMINE BOWER

I KNOW a bower where the jessamine blows,
Far in the forest's remotest repose;

 If once the eyes have beholden the golden
Chalices swinging, farewell to the rose!

Just at the bloom-burst of dawn is the hour
God must have fashioned the delicate flower,

 Wrought it of sunlight and thrilled it and filled it
With a beguiling aroma for dower.

Here hath the air an enchantment that seems
Borne from the bourn of desire and of dreams,—

 Borne from the bourn of youth's longing where
 thronging
Dwell all love's glories and glammers and gleams.

Here doth the palm-plume o'er-droop and the pine;
Here doth the wild-grape distil its dark wine;

 Here the chameleon, gliding and hiding,
Changes its hues in the shade and the shine.

Luring the lights are that falter and fail,—
Beryl and amber and amethyst pale,
 Splashes of radiant splendor, and tender
Tints as when twilight is deep in a dale.

By no bold bees are the stillnesses stirred;
Scarce is there bubble of song from a bird,
 Save for the turtle-dove's cooing and wooing,—
Rapture without an articulate word.

Sway on, O censers of bloom and of balm!
Sweeten the virginal cloisters of calm!
 Be there one spot lovely, lonely, where only
Peace is the priestess and silence the psalm!

APRIL-LOVER

APRIL-LOVER, let us seek together

Yon green slope beneath the summit snows,
Footing blithely through the crystal weather
Toward the spot where the arbutus blows!

April-lover, hear the lyric valley

Shouting all the vernal cries of earth!—
Voice of brooks, and tongues of winds that rally,
The sweet bird-recessional of mirth.

April-lover, see the mounting splendor

Of the sunshine marching on before!
Mark the budding colors, twilight-tender,
Revelling by rill and river shore!

April-lover, scent the subtle attar,—

Finer than from flowers of orient dye,—
That the lavish courier-breezes scatter
As they journey up and down the sky!

April-lover, ah, my April-lover,
I at heart am with you when you say,
There's no time like that when we discover
Spring upon her olden, golden way!

THE ABBEY BY THE SKELL

IN the abbey by the Skell,
 O the lapsing of the years
Since the last monastic bell
 Sounded sad upon the ears
Of the holy men who there
Bowed in final praise and prayer!

All day long the doves make moan
 In the over-topping tower;
From the crevices of stone
 Waves the grass and nods the flower;
And yet still doth grandeur dwell
In the abbey by the Skell.

Gone are porch and pillar; gone
 Are the windows grand that gave,
At the blossom-burst of dawn,
 Such a glory to the nave,
Such a soft, celestial spell
To the abbey by the Skell.

Mourns the immemorial yew
In the cloisters green and wide
For the brother band that grew
By the singing river's side;
Now but one its tale can tell
Of the abbey by the Skell.

What a sermon here is writ
By the ancient hand of Time!
We have paused to ponder it,
And would weave the text in rhyme
Ere we breathe our low farewell
To the abbey by the Skell.

By a miracle of birth
Beauty buddeth from decay,
So a godly work on earth
Never fadeth quite away,
Though it be not tangible
Like the abbey by the Skell.

A WANDERER

Now that the gulfs of dusk are deep,
And birds have hushed their happy themes,
I wander down the aisles of sleep
Hung with the tapestry of dreams.

The little silvery winds go by
With fluting softly passionall;
The stars march up the midnight sky,
And yet I heed them not at all.

For I have felt the enchanter's wand,
And know my soul, released once more,
As elemental as the frond
Amid the mosses by the shore.

What now to me the coil of clay,
Since I may fare, at my desire,
Beyond the azure bourns of day,
Beyond the utmost planet's fire!

All nature's vast, mysterious face
 'Tis mine,—an intimate,—to see;
I taste for just a breathing space
 The freedom of eternity.

A breathing space!—and then,—and then,
 The robins' matins, and I rouse,
To find that I am once again
 In my contracted prison-house.

THE VERNAL FIRE

FROM tip to tip of the briar,
I see it kindle and run,—
The mystical, vernal fire
Whose source is the sun.

Along the slopes it thrills,
Greening the umber mould,
And it spangles the marge of the rills
With the cowslip-gold.

It flashes out on the cheek
That the rathe hepatica turns;
And the violet, shy and meek,
With its ardor burns.

Every bearing bough
Is prescient, and every blade,
From the mountain's brackened brow
To the depths of the glade.

I feel it, too,—am fain
With a touch of the old desire;
My lost youth comes again
With the vernal fire.

Love, your hand once more!
Would that the dream might stay,—
The rapt dream o'er and o'er,
For aye and a day!

STREAM MUSIC

WHENE'ER I wander up and down the world,
Treading the shores of its great water-ways,
And listening to their tidal undertones,—
The Rhine, the Rhone, the Danube, or the Nile,—
'Tis not their music that I seem to hear,
(Their laughing trebles, or deep organ-strains,)
But rather the clear singing of a stream
That flows melodious by the doors of home!
My ear may not escape it; and, at last,
When it shall be my turn upon the tide
Of the Dark River to adventure forth,
It shall be then as now. I know the sound
Will not portentous seem, nor sad, nor strange,
But soft and soothing as the murmur borne
In days of childhood by the doors of home!

THE SUMMONER

'Twas this morning when the winds were rocking
Larch and linden with a rhythmic swing,
That the crested woodpecker came knocking
For admission at the door of Spring.

“Open open!” seemed he to be saying,
“For the portal has been shut too long;
We are grown impatient for the Maying,
And the sweet processional of song!

“For the buoyant outring of brook-laughter;
For the meadows goldening to smiles;
For the soft green on the woodland rafter,
And the bloom-burst down the forest aisles!”

Still I saw about me glow and glisten
Ancient Winter's white environing,
As I leaned in eagerness to listen
To the sibyl answer of the Spring.

Then, responsive to the bird's insistence,
From the margin of some cloistral shore
Came a murmur up the hollow distance,
"On the morrow will I ope the door!"

Hail, thou summoner of the azure weather,
Herald of Spring's portal backward thrown!
With another sunrise we together
Once again shall win unto our own!

THE SONG

*Out of wind and sun and dew
I would shape a song for you!*

First from out the wind should be
Happy hints of melody;
Little rippling slips of tone,
To the ear of evening known;
Tiny echoes of the shell
Breathed into by ocean's swell;
Lark-note, nightingale and thrush,
Rustling bough and river rush.

Then the sun should yield its shine,
Golden words for every line;
Glints of skyey amber ore,—
Simile and metaphor;
Throbbing wave-beats, vital, warm,
Passion in its noblest form,
Morning's ecstasy of light
After the surcease of night.

From the globe of dew should come
Crystals of exordium;
Essences of prisms blend
Joining opening and end;
And a close of flawless pearl,
Whorl upon pellucid whorl;
Every thought as virgin clear
As the perfect parent sphere.

*Out of wind and sun and dew
I would shape a song for you!*

LYRIC TIME

Now the sap begins to climb
In the linden and the lime;
 With it mounts the olden rapture;
Masters, it is lyric time!

Young desire along the vein
Quickens to a throbbing strain,
 And the spirit fain would capture
Vanished ecstasy again.

Flushing into prisms hues,
Every dormant thing renews;
 All along each vernal valley
Countless colors form and fuse.

Every thicket over-spills
With a myriad mellow trills;
 Sally upon silvery sally
Echoes up and down the hills.

Runs from tree to vocal tree
An elusive harmony;
 Now a whisper faint and fleeting,
Now a chorus full and free.

Brook to singing brook replies;
Fount with welling fountain vies;
 O the music of the meeting
Of the mountains and the skies!

Dawn or sunset,—dim or bright,—
Every hour evokes delight;
 To evolve the perfect pæan
Sun and moon and stars unite.

Life seems set to smoother rhyme,
And the trivial grows sublime;
 Under God's blue empyrean,
Masters, it is lyric time!

THE HOUSE MELODIOUS

THERE'S a mighty house of marvels builded
Wherein all the spacious rooms are free;
With warm sunlight are the rafters gilded,
And with sapphire gleams the high roof-tree.

'TIS a house no human master fashioned,
Tremulous with sudden hopes and fears;
God aforetime reared it to the impassioned
Vibrant music of the swinging spheres.

Not in one diurnal round he raised it,
But with slow accretions moulded he;
And when he beheld his work he praised it,
And he dowered its heart with melody.

Spreading arch and spraying plinth and pillar,
Night-tide, bright-tide, never are they mute,—
Now high pipings than the hautboy shriller,
Now low whisperings softer than the lute!

Far as the imagination ranges,—
 Tempest and tranquillity of tone,—
Here are all the sweet mysterious changes
 That unto the ear of man are known!

Aye, and when the radiant morn is gilding
 Where the immemorial roof-tree rears,
One may feel how God is ever building
 To the music of the swinging spheres!

WHEN VIOLETS ARE IN THEIR PRIME

WHEN violets are in their prime,
And skies are like my true love's eyes,
When we forget the rut and rime
In hearkening to the thrush's cries,
Howe'er so sweet the minstrelsy
Within doors with the poets be,
'Tis not for me, 'tis not for me!

Merry, forsooth, the ingle-mirth,
When days are brief and nights are long!
And if the leaguer walk the earth,
Dear, then, the solacing of song;
But now for me the rillet's rhyme,
The wooing airs, the wild bird's chime,
When violets are in their prime!

WOODLAND SONG

VOICES are calling us out of the dingle,—

“Come away!”—so they say,—“come away!

Musical voices that mellowly mingle;

“Here,” they declare, “’mid the ferns and the
mosses,

You may lay by all your losses and crosses!

Out through the gold of the day

Come away!”

“Under the trees there is waiting a treasure!

“Come away!”—voices say,—“come away!

O such a manifold measure of pleasure;—

Worry forgotten; no care for a burden;

Freedom for friend and heart-joy for a guer-
don;

Through the fresh green of the May

Come away!”

EVENING IN SALISBURY CLOSE

THE sudden sunlight swept the minster-close,
Day's expiation for its hours of gloom;
And every figure on the fair façade,
Each saint with hand uplifted, gained a grace,
A happier halo than the sculptor's art,
Howe'er so marvel-working, had bestowed.
Only the pillared porch and those deep eyes,
The windows wide that ever watch the west,
Caught the wind-wavering shadows of the elms.
All the great Gothic glory of the spire
Reached heavenward irradiate; gray to gold
By momentary magic turned, and poised
Like some aërial pinnacle of dream.
And while the sight hung on the miracle,
Out of the silent symmetry of the tower
Slipped down the unseen silver of the chimes,
Softer than snowfall, soothing as the sense
Of slumber after vigils held till dawn.

THE VISITOR

WITHOUT my door at morning-tide
There rang a summons hale and fair;
I roused and threw the portal wide,
And lo, young April there!

Bloom-secrecies she showed to me,
The coils through which all being stirs,
Till, spelled by her soft witchery,
My heart was wholly hers.

So now when up the year's bright slope
A call comes ringing o'er and o'er,
I fling the portal wide, in hope
'Tis April at the door.

GAFFER TIME

OH, who has seen gray Gaffer Time
Along this broad highway pass by?
Will no one speak, will no one say,
Of all this noble company?

Youth, have you seen gray Gaffer Time?
"Nay," answered gay-heart Youth; "not I!
Though I be fleet, he tops the hill,
And speeds afar ere I draw nigh."

Age, hast thou seen gray Gaffer Time?
"Nay," halting Age replied; "not I!
Though I have laid him many a snare,
He slips through every mesh I try."

Joy, hast thou seen gray Gaffer Time?
"Nay," answered smiling Joy; "not I!
Why should I care to look for one
Who makes a mockery of my cry?"

Sorrow, hast thou seen Gaffer Time?

“Nay,” glooming Sorrow quoth; “not I!
Still he evades my questing step,
Albeit our paths together lie.”

Love, hast thou seen gray Gaffer Time?

“Nay,” white-browed Love replied; “not I!
Though I have begged him show his face,
Yet he vouchsafes me no reply.”

Death, hast thou seen gray Gaffer Time?

“Nay,” answered quiet Death; “not I!
Why should I tryst with such as he,
Who is of those that do not die?”

Then none has seen gray Gaffer Time

Of all so wise a company;
And I who seek him up and down,
Alas! alas! what chance have I?

WHERE ECHO DWELLS

SOME summer morn immersed in calm,
When every wafture breathes of balm,
Take you the pathway under hill,
Night-haunted by the whippoorwill,
Until, where beech and birch confer,
And hemlocks make their harp-like stir,
A sweeping amphitheatre
Opens, golden green, upon the view;
There Echo dwells, and waits for you.

The elderberry every hour
Adds to the purple of its dower;
With every dusk, with every dawn,
The mandrake fruit takes amber on;
A gossip brook gives happy hint
Of spruce and sassafras and mint;
While overhead, a luring tint,
The vast vault arches, virgin blue;
There Echo dwells, and waits for you.

If you bespeak her loud or low,
At night-heart, or at morning-glow,
Trump-clear, or subtle-sweet and shy,
Swiftly her voice will make reply.
Never beheld, or near or far,
Elusive as blown perfumes are,
Evasive as a falling star,
With all her ariel retinue,
Fair Echo dwells, and waits for you!

A SUMMER DAY

AGAIN across the calm of morn
The sharp cicada shrills;
Again the pee-wee, lone and lorn,
Pipes from the wooded hills;
And meadow-ward athwart the plain
Slow moves the harvest wain.

Again the fever of the noon
Touches the toiler's brow;
Again in haze the grain-fields swoon,
And lifeless hangs the bough;
Again the rill, its course along,
Hushes its under-song.

Again the pensive eve draws on,
And earth's fast-closing eyes
A space are raised to dwell upon
The wonder of the skies;
Again untroubled, boundless, deep,
Broods the vast sea of sleep.

THE LURE OF THE WOODLAND

GREEN o' leaf, sheen o' leaf, tremulous, wavery,
Where down the aisleways the errant airs blow;
Arras of maple-boughs,—emerald bravery!
Always the twilight, and never the glow.

Wren-call and glen-call,—a thrush fluting mel-
lowly,—
And a far whippoorwill, mournful and faint,
Then a near robin-note, friendly and fellowly,
And the small phœbe-bird's die-away plaint.

Rook-gabble, brook-babble; jewel-weed shimmering;
And the tall bee-balm with torches alight;
And in the darksome most recesses glimmering,
Lo, the white ghost-flowers, like stars in the night!

Lure o' heart, every part,—mystery, magicry;
Wonder!—a world of it hid from the day!
Cure for care everywhere, balm for life's tragicry;
Up, then, my comrade, and let us away!

THE WOOD THRUSH AT EVE

At the wood edge, what time the sun sank low,
We lingered speechless, being loath to leave
The cool, the calm, the quiet touch of eve,
And all the glamour of the afterglow.
We watched the purple shadows lengthen slow,
Saw the swift swallows through the clear air
 cleave,
And bats begin their wayward flight to weave,
Then rose reluctantly, and turned to go.

But ere we won beyond the warder trees,
From out the dim deep copse that hid the swale
Welled of a sudden flutelike harmonies
Flooding the twilight, scale on silvery scale,
As though we heard, far o'er the sundering seas,
The pain and passion of the nightingale.

THE SUMMONS

I HEAR the morning calling me
Through the shut casement, fresh and clear;
"Come forth, O laggard one," saith she,
"And taste the sweetness of the year!

"Lo, I will spread before your eyes
The pageant you have yearned for long;
I will unfold, in lyric wise,
The dreamed-of ecstasies of song.

"Before you up the hills shall run
Mirth, and her frolic-footed brood;
Along the valleys shall the sun
Gem all the dews, in golden mood.

"The little brethren of the boughs
Shall shake their laughter down the wind;
And you shall list the whispered vows
Of vine and blossom intertwined."

At such a call, he who would bide
 Within would be a thing for scorn!—
I toss my tiresome task aside,
 And hasten forth to greet the morn.

HALCYON WEATHER

HERE'S to the halcyon weather,
And the wild, unfettered will,
The crickets chirring, the west wind stirring
The hemlocks on the hill!
Here's to the faring foot, and here's to the dream-
ing eye!
And here's to the heart that will not be still
Under the open sky!

Ever the gypsy longing
Comes when the halcyons wing;
Once you own it, once you have known it,
Oh, the thrall of the thing!
A flute-call and a lute-call, quavering loud or low,
It clutches you with its rapturing,
And it will not let you go!

So it's hail to you, my rover,
The god-child of the sun!
In our heir-dom,—freedom from care-dom,—
You and I are one!

One with the many migrants, field-folk feathered
or furred,

Ever ready to rally and run
At the sign of the silvery word!

The ways we were wont to follow,

We are fain of them no more;

Rather the braided boughs and the shaded

Paths by the rillet shore!—

The tansy hints and the myrrh of mints, and the
balms that the balsams shed,

The berries, crimson-sweet at the core,
By these are we lured and led.

Then here's to the halcyon weather,

And the old, untrammelled will,—

Cicadas tuning, the west wind crooning

Behind the crest of the hill!

Here's to the truant foot, and here's to the dream-
ing eye!

And here's to the heart that will not be still
Under the open sky!

POET AND LOVER

THOU say'st that thou hast seen
 One tread this greening way
Whose mood and mien
 Were like the flush of day!
Looked she sun-wayward smiles?
"Aye! aye!" quoth Giles.

Thou say'st that thou hast heard
 One fleet this path along
Whose every word
 Was like a matin song!
Joined bird and brook the whiles?
"Aye! aye!" quoth Giles.

Thou say'st that thou hast known
 One, lightly footing, pass,
Sweet as wind-blown
 Eve-perfumes from the grass!
Breathed she all flowery wiles?
"Aye! aye!" quoth Giles.

O most ecstatic glow!
O wondrous visioning!
To hear, to know,
The Spirit of the Spring!
What folly thee beguiles?
" 'Twas Sylvia!" quoth Giles.

THE NIGHT BEAUTIFUL

DAY-LONG the fiery and un pitying sun
 Flamed in a sky that glowed like burnished brass;
Dun stretched the ribbon of the road, and dun
 The reaches of the grass.

In the still willow shadows by the pool
 The cattle herded, standing dewlap-deep;
And all the beechen aisles, erewhile so cool,
 Were sunk in fervid sleep.

But with the dusk the vesper ecstasies
 Of the charmed wood-thrush stirred our hearts
 to hope;
And then there breathed the blessing of a breeze
 Adown the western slope.

The graceful garden-primrose set alight
 Its little globes of lemon-gold, and soon
High in the deep blue garden of the night
 Flowered the great primrose moon.

And we forgot the garishness, the glare,
The parching meadows, and the shrunken streams,
And in the glamour of that magic air
We gave ourselves to dreams.

THE QUESTING FOOT

Now that the blue-flag stirs at the root,
This is the time of the questing foot!—

Time to loiter and laze along,
With never a thought save of meadow-song,

Or of woodland silence that filters through
To your spirit's core like the balm of dew!

Only a wisp of a cloud above,
White as the dreams of the one you love.

Underneath, a turf whose sheen
Is the very glossiest gold and green;

A wind that lures you with subtle hints
Of upland balsams and lowland mints;

A something,—call it charm or spell,—
Elusive and intangible,

That leads one ever and ever away
On to the purple verge of day.

Now that the blue-flag stirs at the root,
O to fare on the questing foot!

SUMMER REGNANT

WITH sweet reluctance in her golden eyes
Summer hath put the imperial rose away,
And donned her poppy-crown, whose gorgeous dyes
Are like the skies of the declining day;
The minstrel wind that erst was wont to say
Musical matins at the prime of morn
Now swoons within the pine-tree tops afar;
And when the bee forsakes his drowsy horn,
Red glows the evening star.

It is the season of forgetfulness,
And e'en the sharp cicada, fiving high,
Jars us not back to any sense of stress;
We are content to let the hours slip by
As doth the stream that lapseth languidly;
Why should we tease ourselves to find the clue
To life's enigmas, — whence, and why, and
where,—
With o'er us brooding such ethereal blue,
Such vasts of halcyon air!

In opulence of calm enough to dwell

On all the engirdling beauty,—to give o'er
To the inthralment of the slumberous spell,
Letting it clasp us as the sea the shore!

Like those that drink mandragora, no more
We heed the future, or what dead days owned;
For us the present, and our realm of dream,
Where, by the side of Summer, sits enthroned
Love, regnant and supreme!

A SUMMER PASTORAL

I KNOW a little glade wherein to dwell,
When poppy-garlands crown the drowsing year,
Were honeyed happiness,—for I might hear
The hermit-thrush at twilight from his cell
Salute the love-star, and might feel the spell
That Hylas yielded to, for subtile-clear
The pool there limns the deep eyes of the deer,
And winds bear draughts of dreamy hydromel.

And closer might I win to Arcady,
For reeds there are to pluck and notch and tune,
As in the simpler, happier days of man;
And if I blew, and Echo answered me,
Sooth, I might fancy, underneath the moon,
Slim maidens dancing to the pipes of Pan!

THE EARTH-LOVER

BE it sad or singing season,
Time of mourning or of mirth,
With a lover's blithe unreason
His a passion for the earth.

Of the wealth of his affection
Seed and leaf and sheaf have part;
And he takes, without reflection,
Every growing thing to heart.

Weft of grass and blossom-petal,
Root of flag and tip of reed,
Barb of thorn and sting of nettle,—
Each contributes to his need.

And a love he would not smother
Is for the fresh-turned red loam,
Since he knows that, like a mother,
It will one day call him home.

From the old familiar places
He will by it be beguiled,
And within its warm embraces
Slumber softly as a child.

THE GYPSY WIND

THE gypsy wind goes down the night,
I hear him lilt his wander-call;
And to the old divine delight
Am I a thrall.

It's out, my heart, beneath the stars
Along the hillways dim and deep!
Let those who will, behind dull bars,
Commune with sleep!

For me the freedom of the sky,
The violet vastnesses that seem
Packed with a sense of mystery
And brooding dream!

For me the low solitudes
The tree-tops whisper, each to each,
The silences wherein intrudes
No mortal speech!

For me far subtler fragrances
Than any spell of morn transmutes,
And melodies and minstrelsies
From fairy lutes!

My cares,—the harrying throng take flight,
My woes,—they lose their galling sting,
When I, with the hale wind of night,
Go gypsying!

BEE-BALM

THE bee is abroad
In the zenith heat of noon,
When all of the winds are awed,
And the waters swoon.

The meads are asleep,
But never a buzz cares he;
Down in the dingle deep
There's balm for the bee.

Here are torches gay
Spangled with scarlet fire,
To light the dusk of the way
To his heart's desire.

What a bounteous brew
Awaiteth his thirsty call!—
Casks of honey-dew
For the bacchanal.

A SUNSET BREEZE

ALL of the livelong day there was scarcely a rustle
of leaves,

The writhing river burned like a molten serpent
of fire;

The reaper dropped his scythe, and the binder fled
from his sheaves,

And a breeze on the throbbing brow was the
world's supreme desire.

When the disk of the sun dipped down there sprang
from out of the west

A sudden wafture of wind that crinkled the un-
mown grain;

The kine were glad in the field, and the bird was
glad on the nest,

And the heart of the mother leaped that her
prayer was not in vain.

For the sunset breeze stole in with healing upon
its breath,

Winnowed the fevered air with a single sweeten-
ing sweep;

Out of the back-swung door slipped the pallid angel
of death,

And lo, as the mother knelt, the baby smiled in
its sleep!

AN IDLE DAY

THIS day will I cast off the coil
Of aging worry and of toil,
And seek the soothing soul-caress
Of Idleness.

For sometimes it is well to be
Both body-free and spirit-free,
To own no gyve, no cincturing wall,
No thrall at all.

The harper wind strides o'er the hill;
His truant will I make my will;
Two jovial comrades, forth we hie
Beneath the sky.

We loiter; who shall cry us "nay?"
We hasten; who shall bid us stay?
By stream or woodland-side we brood,
As suits our mood.

And ah, the golden grain I reap
From this one long, from this one deep
Day-dwelling, in the dream-duress
Of Idleness!

I slough the husk of discontent,
And feel no longer hedged and pent;
I look on all that round me lies
With saner eyes.

I gather from the bounteous earth
A quiet joy, an inner mirth;
And life, where'er I pass along,
Seems set to song.

THE HALCYON

I SEE thee on yon sycamore's wounded bough,
 Apart from all the wood choir's silvery noise,
Sit like a mournful watcher at the prow,
 In lonely equipoise.

Yet thou art harbinger of all things fair,
 For o'er regenerate earth now seems to brood
The immaterial loveliness of air,
 The sky's blue vastitude.

SONG OF THE MORNING STARS

THROUGH the abysses of the sky
Surge upon surge the years sweep by,
Yet still our spheral voices chime,
For we are over-lords of Time.

We view all secrets face to face,—
The deep solemnities of space,
The rayless voids of outer sea,
The courts of God's eternity.

It is our bliss to be above
All passions save eternal Love,
And this our choral lips rehearse
Throughout the listening universe.

So shall the centuries wax and wane
Till Song and Love alone remain,
And all shall join our deathless chime,
Like us the over-lords of Time.

THE JESTER AND THE BUTTERFLIES

FAIR elves of frolic, dancers of the air,
Gay pirouetters in the noonday sun,
Blithe summer nurslings with your lives soon done,
Would I might all of your abandon share!
You know not age; 'tis never yours with spare
And tottering Decrepitude to shun
The primrose pathways that Youth smiles upon,
Who are like Youth forever debonair.

Thus would I fain adventure; have my day
Bright in the splendid sunlight; never feel
The clutching cold that lies in wait for Age;
Trip to the summer's jocund roundelay
The madsomest, the merriest, then steal
Sudden and swift from off life's comic stage!

IVY LANE

(A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY LOVE SONG)

IVY LANE in Devon,—
That's the place for me!
The sweet air mellow
With the burden of the bee;
High up in heaven
The blue, blue glow;
But Ivy Lane in London,—
O no, no!

Bare walls sullen
In the grim gray air;
Close-shut windows
With a cold blank stare;
Never lark or linnet
A-warbling low;
Ivy Lane in London,—
O no, no!

But Ivy Lane in Devon,—
 Sunlight and song,
 And beauty of blossoms
 The glad day long;
 Then love in the twilight
 With starry eyes aglow . . .
 Ivy Lane in London,—
 O no, no!

Ivy Lane in London,—
 Stress and strain and strife,
 All of the sweetness
 Hurried out of life!
 But far from the clamor
 By the wide west sea,
 Ivy Lane in Devon,—
 That's the place for me!

OF RHYME

Nor for mine ear
The rigid rhyme austere,
But that which swings and sways with mellow beat,
And soft recurrence of alluring feet!
Not for mine eye
The palely sculptured line,
But that which hath the shimmer and the shine
Of skyey metaphor, the mid-day dye
Of golden simile, and clearly shows
Imagination's emerald and rose!
Bird, brook, and wind-call; the wild pulse of storm;
All life's unnumbered colors, sweet and warm;
Rapture and sorrow; the swift flux of time;—
These would I have both sing and glow in rhyme!

RAIN

I HEAR the soft re-iterance of the rain
Upon the roof above me, like a tune
With melancholy measure, one as hoar
As are the silent footfalls of old Time.
And though the burden borne unto mine ear
Runs in the plaintive minor, yet my mood
Is rather one of rapture than of pain.
Albeit alone, the demon loneliness
Is by a kindly angel exorcised ;
I brush aside the cobwebs of the years
As one breaks gossamer, and cloudy morns,
And likewise long unazured afternoons,
Are quick again. Eyes on responsive eyes
Linger and flash ; voice answers friendly voice,
And laughter soars as does the thrush uncaged.
High 'neath the eaves upon the hills of hay
The boys, now gray, touch hand and heart again,
Whiles with insistent monotone above
Murmurs the rain-song. Ah, I love the sound,—
The soothing, soft re-iterance of the rain !

MAID'S SONG IN MOURNING

HOURS that once had swallow wings
Poise on heavy pinions now;
Reft of all its rapturings,
Silent hangs the singing bough.
Down the wind the voices call,
And like tears the raindrops fall.

*Skies may beam with blue again,
Birds may come to woo again,
But not here for me, dear, and not here for you
again!*

Barren are the ways where erst
Foot to foot kept married time;
Joy is like a bubble burst,
There's a jar in every rhyme.
Ah, my heart were not a-cold
Had I, love, thy hand to hold!

*Spring will lift the gloom again,
Rise from out the tomb again,
But not here for us, dear, the bud or the bloom
again!*

THE WARBLER

WARBLER, of the pale gold breast,
Whither, whither away?
The wind is wild about the nest,
And into the sunset or the dawn
The cherished nestlings all are gone;
Heigh-ho! and well-a-day!
Warbler, whither away?

Warbler, of the pale gold breast,
There's ever a home, you say,—
Or be it east, or be it west;
But ah, how sad to build and find
No nestling one day but the wind!
Heigh-ho! and well-a-day!—
That's what the lone hearts say.

DOVES IN THE RAIN

DULL and ashen the day;
Drip,—you may hear the eaves;
Drip,—you may see the leaves;
Rillets bubble and run;
Never a gleam of sun
While the gray hours wear away.

Over the slanting slates,
Under the cupola's crown,
Snowy and blue and brown,
Crouch the forms of the doves,
Cooing their matin loves,
Mates to amorous mates.

Lo, the gloom is gone,
Fades like a deep night dream,
Lost in the sunrise beam!
Dazzles before my eyes
The sweep of Venice skies,
With their pageantry of dawn;

Venice skies and the square,—
San Marco's domes ashine
Like the amber Asti wine;
The giant in the tower
Hammering out the hour
On the hush of the southern air.

This, and the throng of doves
On the palace cornices,
Flocking crevice and frieze,
With flutter and perk and preen
In the gold-shot azure sheen,
As they murmur of their loves.

Woo and coo again!—
Yea, I am well content
With all that is blurred and blent
(Hours of the radiant past
As though in a mirror glassed)
In the rhythmic fall of the rain!

AN AUTUMN SONG

AGAIN the old heraldic pomp
Of Autumn on the hills;
A scarlet pageant in the swamp;
Low lyrics from the rills;
And a rich attar in the air
That orient morn distils.

Again the tapestry of haze
Of amethystine dye
Encincturing the horizon ways;
And from the middle sky
The iterant, reverberant call
Of wild geese winging by.

Again the viols of the wind
Attuned to one soft theme;—
Here, every burden left behind,
O love, would it not seem
A near approach to paradise
To dream and dream and dream!

THE WEAVER

WHO is it weaves such marvellous tapestries
In dyes that dazzle if the eyes but scan?
Richer of hue and of design are these
Than fabrics Tyrian!

Yonder is cloth of gold more royal bright
Than that whereon King Henry Francis met,
When they put by the mailèd gage of fight
For friendship's silken net.

That russet there is of a glossier sheen
Then e'er was donned by merry Robin Hood,
To lead his lads, who wore the Lincoln green,
Through Sherwood's shadowy wood.

And yonder scarlet braver far appears
Than that which decked the pennons of the bold
Who urged the lines of the embattled spears
Through the red wars of old.

Who is this weaver in these wondrous dyes
That works such magic in the hours of gloom?
Go, and perchance to-night you may surprise
September at her loom!

THE PIPES OF AUTUMN

A THRILL as of exuberant will
The rimpling corn-fields know,
As o'er the vale and up the hill
The pipes of Autumn blow.

Across the orchards tremors toss,
And golden ripples run
O'er hillocks where the milkweed's floss
Is shimmering in the sun.

Once more beside the runlet's shore
The violet opes its eyes;
Once more the dandelion's ore
As though May-minted lies.

A-blur with gleamy gossamer
Is every upland lawn;
The woodland, save where glooms the fir,
Is wrapt in dreams of dawn.

Like spring's the last fleet whir of wings,
The last low lyric cry
That down the hazy distance rings
To dip and faint and die.

A thrill takes hold upon the will
And sets the cheeks aglow,
As o'er the vale and up the hill
The pipes of Autumn blow.

JOY AND SORROW

SHALL we let Joy go by,
He of the kindling eye?
Nay, comrade, nay!
But lo, he wends his uncompanioned way!

Shall we bid Sorrow bide,
He that is mournful-eyed?
Nay, comrade, nay!
But lo, he lingers, bidden not to stay!

CONTRASTS

AFTER the long green levels of the plain,
The primrose ways, the scented paths of thyme,
Welcome the slopes that stir the dormant vein,
The soaring cliffs that dare the feet to climb!

After the dull monotonies of life,
The placid days that with no ripple roll,
Welcome the strain, the stinging taste of strife,
The immitigable stress that tests the soul!

AN INSTRUMENT

A HUMAN heart, this was the instrument
That many, dowered with cunning skill, essayed ;
Joy fingered it, and Fear above it bent,
And Sorrow her pale hands upon it laid.

Then Anger smote it, and Despondency,
And Passion swept it with his touch of flame ;
But it gave forth no wondrous melody
Till Love, the masterful musician, came.

TIME

TIME oft is limned decrepit, wizened, old,
With wintry hair rough shaken by the breeze,
One who on life has but a feeble hold,
A graybeard ambling upon tottering knees.

Ah, the dull folly of such portraiture!
Time gray? Time old? See how he runs, for-
sooth!
Within his veins there courses, swift and sure,
The Olympian ichor of eternal youth!

THE HAUNTS OF YOUTH

DOUBTER, say, wouldst thou behold
Essence that is never old?
Wouldst thou gaze and dwell upon
Energies that sing and run
Ever vital, true and tense
In their vernal innocence?
From thy dullard dreamery
Rise thou, then, and come with me
Where the forest shadows fall!—
There is youth perpetual.

Never burn the fires so low
Underneath the shroud of snow
That they are not swift to leap
Lissome from the trance of sleep;
E'en behind the deepest moan
Hides a hint of virile tone;
In the darkest shades withdrawn
Waits the golden lily,—dawn!
Youth, the forest's fairest thrall,
Youth abides perpetual.

SNOWFALL

STAINLESS as Truth, or Purity's white face,
Behold the snow fall! Never came a dream
On lighter pinions from the courts of Sleep.
What is as soft as this ærial fleece,
This visual foam upon the unseen air,
Unless it be the sweep of seraph's wings
Down the inviolate ways of Paradise!
Or, cool on the contracted brow of Pain,
The healing touch of Death's caressing hand!

WINTER DREAMS

ALL the voices of the wind
Sank to slumber with the sun;
Lest the ways of night be blind,
Burn the beacons one by one
Where the bastions of the sky
In their ancient wonder lie.

Wide the solitudes of snow,
Flawed by no assoiling breath,
Slumber in the spectral glow,
Wan as is the face of death;
Fixed in fear the woodland seems,
And the air is full of dreams.

One of this ethereal brood
Fate has bidden comrade me:
Suddenly my sombre mood
Kindles to expectancy,
And there beat within my brain
Presages of April rain.

WINTER DREAMS

Oh, for all the dreams of night,
If this transient one has power
So to touch the source of light,
So to set the gloom aflower!
Then, mayhap, to stay my need,
In my heart were spring indeed.

THE WHITE BIRCH

OVER the lonely uplands

The snows of the north are blown,
And the white birch of the forest
At last has won to its own.

We watched it through the spring-time,
Clad in its silvery spray,
And fell in a maze of wonder
At the graceful, pale estray.

We marked it through the summer,
Tenuous, tall and thin,
And we thought of it, touched with pity,
That it sorrowed for its kin.

We gazed on through the autumn,
When the rich year poms it by,
And we saw it fold about it
The alien gold of the sky.

THE WHITE BIRCH

But now that a samite vesture
Over all the earth is thrown,
The white birch of the forest
At last has won to its own.

HOMESICK

HERE, within Winter's white domain,
I am as one who has no place,
For all the diverse ways contain
No fair familiar face.

My old-time comrades,—bees and birds,
The little leaves that love the sun,
With their companionable words,—
Alas, I hear not one!

Not one!—and to my aching heart,
As through this spectral realm I roam,
Comes the inexorable smart,—
The wander-cry for home.

O Summer, hearken, I implore,
You with the eyes benign and mild!
To your caressing arms once more
Take back your homesick child!

WINTER ON THE HILLS

WHAT do the city houselings know
Of Winter hale and hoar,
Who crouch beside the back-log's glow
Behind the battened door?

Not theirs the wonder of the waste,—
White league on league out-rolled;
Not theirs 'neath spacious skies to taste
The tonic of the cold!

Not theirs the North-Wind's breath to breast
Till each vein tingles warm
The while he drives along the west
The horses of the storm!

Not theirs the snows as soft as sleep
That hill and hollow hood;
Nor the oracular silence deep
Within the druid wood!

Not theirs by night, undimmed, to mark
The spangles of the Bear;
Nor through the dark from arc to arc
The pale auroras flare!

Not theirs to share the proffered part
Of wealth he holds in store;
Not theirs to know the constant heart
Of Winter hale and hoar!

A WINTER NIGHT

I HEAR the casement creak and clang,
The frosted fir boughs gasp and groan;
And the lone wind is like a hound
That growls and crunches on a bone.

I raise the curtain; ne'er a star
Pricks the vast vault, but snowy spume
Cloaks monstrous shapes that ride the night
Like evil wraiths, and trumpet "doom!"

The angry whip-cords of the sleet
The windows lash, as they were fain
To fling defiance in my face
Through the thin rampart of the pane.

It is as though the door of Dread
Had yawned, with a portentous birth;
And yet, let but the morning dawn,
And lo, how white the peace of earth!

THE OLD YEAR TO THE NEW

THE snows of death are drifting deep,
And I have nothing left to gain,
Save the long legacy of sleep
Beyond the reach of joy or pain.

But you, the lithe and strong of thew,—
For you the onward-luring star,
The splendors of the sun,—for you
Youth's ardors that eternal are;

To note the spring's ecstatic stir,
The faint red maple-buds unclose;
To be the violet's worshipper,
And play the wooer to the rose;

To watch the swallow, swift of wing,
Soaring across the sky's blue nave;
To hear the minstrel oriole sing,
A rapture in each golden stave;

To know love's sweet companionship
Along the wonder-haloed height;
To press unto the eager lip
The purple fruitage of delight.

Yours the glad sowing of the grain,
The harvest happiness to reap;
While I have nothing left to gain,
Save the long legacy of sleep.

IN THE MAPLE WOOD

CRIMSON burn the briar-tips now
As the sky at vesper-vow;
 And the sap within the maple
Tingles to the topmost bough.

From its winter-long repose
Wakes the wood; the bonfire glows;
 Up and down the leafless arches
Rings the clamor of the crows.

And from early morning-dream,
Freed by the awakening beam,
 How the sap into the buckets
Trickles in a silvery stream!

Where the maples thickest throng
Plod the toilers late and long,
 While the low voice of the caldron
Sings its ceaseless sugar-song.

Hither when the aisles grow dim
And the pine knots flare and swim,
 Comes a group of laughing lasses,
Cheeks aglow and eyes abrim.

Then the merriment has flow,
Quips go darting to and fro,
 While the more than honeyed nectar
Turns to sugar in the snow.

And if sweeter things than this
Chance (a surreptitious kiss!)
 Where's the man or where's the maiden
Who would count such joy amiss?

For when winter's fetters part,
And the maple juices start,
 Then it is, my maids and masters,
Stirs the love-tide in the heart!

JIM CROW

Oh, say, Jim Crow,
Why is it you always go
With a gloomy coat of black
The year long on your back?
Why don't you change its hue,
At least for a day or two,
To red or green or blue?
And why do you always wear
Such a sober, sombre air,
As glum as the face of Care?
I wait for your reply,
 And into the peaceful pause
There comes your curious, croaking cry,—
 “ Oh, because! 'cause! 'cause! ”

Oh, say, Jim Crow,
Why, when the farmers sow,
And the corn springs up in the row,
And the days that once were brief
Grow long, and laugh into leaf,
Do you play the rascally thief?

I can see by the look in your eye,—
Wary and wise and sly,—
That you know the code in vogue;
Why will you, then, oh, why,
Persist in the path of the rogue?
I hearken for your reply,
And into the empty pause
There rings your graceless, grating cry,—
“ Oh, because! 'cause! 'cause!”

And say, Jim Crow,
With all of the lore you know,—
Lore of the wood and field,
Lore of the clouds, and the clear
Depths of the atmosphere,
To our duller ken concealed,—
Why is it you ever speak
With a mingled squawk and a squeak?
You, with your talents all,
And your knowledge of this and that,
Why must you sing like a squall,
And talk like a perfect “ flat?”
I listen for your reply,
But in the lapse and the pause
All I hear is your impudent cry,—
“ Oh, because! 'cause! 'cause!”

CANDLEMAS SONG

“BRUIN, bruin,
You'll be a-ruin'
That you stuck your nose out,
Or your toes out,
From the cosey tavern
Of your cavern,—
From the dim and dun light
Into the sunlight!
For there's your shadow;
 See it, see it go
Down the meadow
 And over the snow!
But while your cave is cosey,
It must get rather prosy,
This sleeping and this dreaming,
This life that's only seeming,
For visionary honey,
And visionary money,
We're not suin',
Eh, bruin, bruin?

“And bruin, bruin,
We, too, are a-ruin’
That same shadow
Down there on the meadow!
We’ve had enough of housing,—
Crouching by the ingle;
Out in the dingle
We’d like to be carousing;
Hearkening the jostle
Of the wren and throstle;
Just gazing,
Loitering and lazing,
Joying in our journey
Where the ways are ferny.
But oh, there’re six weeks yet of it!
Ah, the gray regret of it!
And the wind and wet of it!
And though it’s a shame
To hold that you’re to blame,
It somehow seems as though it were your doin’,
O bruin, bruin!”

THE WANDERER AT HOME

OF yore, when Mother Fate was kind,
And I was hale and lithe of limb,
I was the comrade of the Wind,
And roved God's spacious earth with him.

And now that Age hath chained me here
Where dreams are like a tidal sea,
He comes and gossips in mine ear
With all his ancient comradery.

He tells me how the Wye still glides
By Tintern in its cloistral vale;
And how by Isis' bowery sides
Still pleads the leaf-hid nightingale.

He voices the soft songs they sing
Where Venice fronts the Adrian main,
And the faint lyric call of spring
Across the lone Campanian plain.

He bids me list the Alpine horn
From heights with spectral light ashine,
And the young shepherd's shout when morn
Lifts from the blue Ægean brine.

He iterates the pilgrim's cry,
In that mysterious nomad land
Where the Sphinx crouches deathlessly,—
Allah-il-Allah,—o'er the sand.

And ere he goes his wandering way
He breathes the fragment of a tune
I once heard gem-bright fingers play
Beneath a golden Shiraz moon.

And so, though I may roam no more
About the world from end to end,
Yet can I touch the furthest shore
Who have the journeying Wind for friend.

THE ISLE OF GLAMOURIE

SET in the midst of a silver sea
Is the radiant isle of Glamourie;
In crescent coves and in coral caves
Sink and swell the sound of the waves,
Like the rise and fall of a tune
Stolen out of the heart of June.
There do marvellous portals ope
To the precious palace-halls of Hope;
And through the lovely labyrinth,
Climbing pillar and clasping plinth,
Is the slender vine of the jasmine-flower,
Filling with fragrance every hour.
Paved with pearl are the winding ways,
Opal, agate, and chrysoprase;
And down long vistas of pendulous palms,
With sunlight flooding the arches tall,
Throughout the lingering noontide calms
Waterfall calls to waterfall.

How shall we sail o'er the silver sea
To the radiant isle of Glamourie?
Just at the violet verge of dark,
Then, forsooth, is the happy time,

For Fancy then, in her fairy bark,
Glides away like a golden rhyme
Over the waves to the coral caves
And the crescent coves that the blue tide laves!
O to come to that glorious isle
Again with the dew-fresh heart of youth,
With never a dream in the brain of guile,
And never a doubt that all is truth!
And ah, the noble company
In the radiant isle of Glamourie!
There, in the deepest, dimmest dell,
Doth the fair enchanted Princess dwell;
There Prester John goes galloping by
To the lilt of his stirring battle-cry;
There doth the valorous Cid abide,
And Roland, whom song hath glorified,—
Haroun, the Orient's splendid star,
Sir Galahad, the stainless knight,
And the King who foremost flashed in the fight
The burning brand Excalibar.

We have all been there in the crystal air,
Where the sweep of the sky is ever fair;
We would all go back o'er the silver sea,
Away from the world and its crowding care
To the wonderful isle of Glamourie!

THE FOUNT OF PAVENAY

WHEN morning set her crimson crown
Upon the Easter day,
Saint Isadore came winding down
The paths of Pavenay.

He saw through all the billowing land
The Spring beside her loom,—
The vernal magic of her hand
In weaving bud and bloom.

And as his footsteps drew anigh
The huddled hamlet square,
He heard mount up the April sky
The plaintive sound of prayer.

“O Thou that dwellest,” cried a voice,
“Where wells eternal flow,
Make Thou our longing hearts rejoice,
A healing boon bestow:

“Brim Thou this basin’s cup once more
With Thy reviving dew!”—
Then forward pressed Saint Isadore
The sealèd fount to view.

He thrust the throng aside, as chaff
Before the wind is blown;
And with his oaken pilgrim staff
He smote the thirsty stone.

It seemed as though that sturdy blow
Cast off the choking spell;
For lo, the fount began to flow,
A pure and living well!

And never, from that Easter hour,
It ceased to sing and run,
Through changing days of frost and flower,—
Of shifting shade and sun.

And ever, when the young year wore
Her Easter garments gay,
Rang praise to good Saint Isadore
Through gray old Pavenay.

AZALAIS

It was the maiden Azalais;
And fairer was her hair to see
Than any garnered golden sheaf,—
Than any ambered linden leaf
Down drifting through the autumn days,
When the sweet autumn days grow brief;
And of her deep eyes, verily,
It might be said,—no pool there lies
Brooding, without or stain or stir,
Beneath God's radiant reach of skies
More wondrous than the eyes of her.

It was the maiden Azalais;
And one there came with casques of gold
And gems from Ophir, and before
Her feet outspread the precious store,
With cunning-coined words of praise,
With honey-hearted metaphor.
And yet she looked upon him cold
And haughtily, nor smiled at all;
Fool, thus to think to win her grace
Who purity perennial
Wore on the rondure of her face!

It was the maiden Azalais;
And one bright-raimented in mail,
With twi-edged falchion, scabbard drawn,
That flashed as doth the blade of dawn,
Made her obeisance with bold gaze,
And craved that she would think upon
Vale billowing upon verdant vale,
His fief by conquest, all her own
Would she but hearken to his suit;
Dolt, how he slunk away alone
When with her scorn she smote him mute!

It was the maiden Azalais;
And one in pilgrim russet clad,
Yet with a bearing rapt as his
Who knows the soul-impassioned kiss
Of lofty love inspire his ways,
Besought her; and her heart grew glad
Listing to Love's sweet litanies,—
His dear and fair and fond demands.
Ah, wise one, thus to woo,—and win!
For not through wealth nor falchioned hands
Love to his kingdom enters in!

GUIDO, THE GONDOLIER

*Over the long lagoon
The orient gold of the moon;
Out of the gardens blown
The rose's spicery,
And the low and languid moan
Of the Adriatic sea!*

Night in Venice,—night,
With its web of spangled dreams!
The Grand Canal alight
With a myriad lantern-beams;
Music in languorous bars
From a maze of strummed guitars;
Lattices open thrown,
And balconies wreathed with bloom;
Gloom?—not a ghost of gloom
In the queenly island-town,
(The sculptured flower of stone
That beauty-lovers praise)
But song borne far adown
Through all of its water-ways!

Song?—aye, strain on strain,
With ever the one refrain!
Love,—its glamour and gleam;
Love,—the rapture-dream!
And the clearest voice in all
Of the crowded carnival,
The most ecstatic note
On the night-tide set afloat
(Golden ripple and run
Like a heavenly antiphon)
That many hung mute to hear,
Was that of a youth,—of one
Guido, the gondolier.

As blithe he was to see
As the lad of the Latmian glen,
The hale Endymion, when
He wooed the queen of the night;
Yet upon no goddess he,
Whose song was without a peer,
Had turned his yearning sight,
But the Doge's daughter, pure
As the Maytime of the year;
And she loved this troubadour,
Guido, the gondolier.

The moon-smile touches the earth;
The bird dips out of the air;
Thus Love, of immortal birth,
Joineth the high and low,
Until it is theirs to know
Bliss or divine despair.
"The garden water-stair
At the heart of the carnival night!"
This was the word that came,
And fanned his soul to a flame,
And thither, without a fear,
Sped, with his oar-sweep light,
Guido, the gondolier.

One little liquid trill,
Such as the nightingales spill,
When the first star burns on the breast
Of the violet-colored west,
Then, a face like the sudden bloom
Of dawn in the scented gloom!
Afar, from wall to wall,
Echoed the carnival;
Song, in a passionate tide,
Swelled, drooped, but never died;
"Rejoice!" all Venice cried,

And the skies gave back, "Rejoice!"
But a voice men longed to hear
Was lifted not,—his voice,—
Guido, the gondolier.

From out of the byways dim,
What long and shadowy shape
Makes sudden swift escape,
And seems like a gull to swim
Over the broad lagoon,
In the radiant flood of the moon?
A gondola, wherein twain,
Fain as a flower is fain
Of the sun, know naught save the bliss
Of love, and a lover's kiss!
The Doge's daughter dear,
And her blithesome minstrel-swain,
Guido, the gondolier.

Why follow them o'er the foam?
They heeded the world-old call,
Caught in its wondrous thrall;
Ravenna, Rimini, Rome?—
Nay, 'tis the Land of Love
(Ah, the happiness thereof!)
That is henceforth their home!

A vision of youth's delight,
They vanished into the night,—
The night of a bygone year,—
The Doge's daughter fair,
Fearless and debonair,
And Guido, the gondolier.

LIFT UP THINE EYES

COMRADE, that seek'st the clue
Of whence and whither to,
Rather, in trust, let be
The shrouded mystery!
Brood not, but toward the skies
Lift up thine eyes!

If the sworn friendship fail,
And fleering foes assail,
If Love, half-deified,
Turn scornfully aside,
If ogre Doubt arise,
Lift up thine eyes!

Grip faith to thee (not fate!)
In the good ultimate!
With this, from sun to sun
Until thy race be run,
And the last daylight dies,
Lift up thine eyes!

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